

Torrance, Anna Mary And Ralph

Editor's Note: Readers write letters to the editor. The following is a letter to readers from an editor.

The other night, conversation turned to the fact that Torrance is a city of young people—a city of youth, a city of the future.

"Why," one man said, "did you know that the average age of people living in Torrance is only 25?"

"And," chimed in another, "that about 40 percent of Torrance is young people under the age of 19?"

"Yes, that's right, and it's wonderful," said an older woman. "But, we older folks have much to contribute to the future, if only by the fact that our lives offer a guide to the young on how to grow old gracefully."

As an example of what she meant, she cited Grandma Moses, who died a year ago last month in the 102nd year of her life.

"Grandma Moses," the older woman continued, "proved to young people the positive advantage of keeping active as they grow older. At an age when most people are retiring from a career, Grandma Moses began a new one."

"She proved that age is not a barrier to life when a person keeps active in mind and body," she said. "Grandma Moses proved that when you have something to offer, there's no need to be afraid of growing old."

Then, the older woman told a fascinating story that illustrates how very young—like Torrance—we Americans are as a nation when we consider our age—not in years—but in people, two people: a man named Ralph Farnham and a woman born Anna Mary Robertson.

The following is the story she told:

Ralph Farnham was one of those men who occupied the heights known as Bunker's Hill and Breed's Hills, near Boston, on the night of June 16, 1775, and fought the next day the battle known to history as Bunker Hill, more than a year before our nation was declared independent.

Eighty-five years later, in 1860 the people of Boston discovered that Ralph Farnham was still alive and that he was the last of that gallant band who fought for us at Bunker Hill.

The Governor of Massachusetts and the Mayor of Boston both signed a letter that was sent north to Acron, Maine, where Ralph lived. The letter invited him to come to Boston and stand once more on the old battlefield of Bunker Hill.

Ralph arrived in Boston on the 9th of October, 1860. Three days later, on Oct. 12,

Watch Torrance Grow! Read The Press To Know!

Torrance is growing. That we know. So, read The Press to watch it grow.

The population of Torrance was 108,900 on November 1, 1962, and by December 10, 1962, it was 114,300 for a growth of 5,400 persons in 404 days.

By dividing 404 into 5,400, the answer seems to be 13.39 with 44 left over.

It's pretty easy to deal in percentages of a cold, hard, mathematical figure, but it is much more difficult to cut a warm living person into percentages.

So, let's lop off that 39 hundredths and say, for the sake of argument, that the average growth of Torrance over the period November 1, 1961, to December 10, 1962 (404 days) was 13 persons per day.

Multiplying the magic number 13 by the 30 days which have elapsed since December 10, 1962, you are one of 114,690 persons living in Torrance today. Congratulations!

Angels Hope Abe's Lucky

The Los Angeles Angels will open their spring training camp at Palm Springs on Lincoln's Birthday, Tuesday, Feb. 12—not Monday, Feb. 11, as previously announced.

General Manager Fred Haney said pitchers and catchers will check in to the Riviera Hotel on the 11, but "workouts will begin the following day."

The balance of the squad will report to manager Bill Rigney and his coaching staff, Tuesday, Feb. 19.

the city took a holiday to honor Ralph Farnham, the last living man who fought at Bunker Hill.

The streets were filled with people, but the crowds were thickest in front of Boston's proud old Revere House. A stately carriage, drawn by a matched team of bay horses, rolled up to the hotel. The doors swung open, and Ralph Farnham walked slowly out into the street.

Bandsmen placed instruments to their lips, a cymbal crashed. The City Guards of Charlestown, where Bunker Hill was fought, whipped muskets smartly to salute.

Time stood still a fleeting instant. A hush fell upon the air.

Then music loudly blared to break that poignant spell.

The aged shoulders of Ralph Farnham straightened. His tired old legs strove to swing in cadence to the music, in some semblance of the long stride they once knew so well.

Mayor Dana, of Charlestown, and Mayor Lincoln, of Boston, raised their hats and helped Mr. Farnham to a seat in the carriage beside them. The horses pranced, and the carriage rolled out of Bowdoin Square. Officers snapped commands, and the band and the Charlestown Guards swung in behind the carriage. The procession passed between silent aisles of people who lined State and Union Streets on the way to Bunker Hill.

When the carriage reached Bunker Hill Monument Square, a young girl stepped out to the carriage to pay the respects of youth to age.

With a joyous smile, she extended a bouquet of flowers. Ralph Farnham smiled, spoke his thanks, and took her gracious gift with one hand, as the other caressed the young girl's silky hair.

A murmur passed through the crowd as the old veteran walked alone slowly to the steps leading to a platform raised above the heads of the crowd. With a man on either side assisting him, Ralph Farnham climbed the steps to the platform.

Around him, 5000 people covered every inch of the square. Above him, rose Bunker Hill monument to say, as it does today: "You, who lost a hill, have won a nation. We are grateful ever more."

Once the ceremonies were over, Mayor Dana led the way down the strais from the speaking stand. Ralph Farnham slowly followed, helped again by kindly hands clambered back into the waiting carriage, which returned to the Revere House by five, and Ralph Farnham's greatest day was done.

On that same 12th October day of 1860, many miles away in Greenwich, N.Y., a tiny baby named Anna Mary Robertson stirred restlessly in her 36th new-born day. Today, more than a century later, we remember Anna Mary affectionately as Grandma Moses.

That is the story the woman told to illustrate how young—like Torrance—we Americans are as a nation.

So long as Grandma Moses lived, our nation was only as old as two people.

Now that she is gone, somewhere in the United States—perhaps right here in Torrance—is a person who will be alive a century from now.

Just think, in 2062, we Americans will be able to say our nation is only as old as three people, and that is very, very young indeed.

IN THE PHILIPPINES

A fourth grade teacher in the Philippines, reviewing her class for a national test, asked, "What is the most important gift the United States gave us?" The answer she wanted was "democracy." But the pupils shouted in unison, "milk!"



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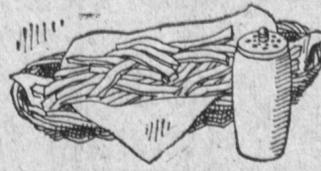
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